

amendments offered by 5 p.m. tomorrow is being discussed in an effort to complete action on this legislation as early as possible this week.

#### ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I now ask that the Senate stand in adjournment under the previous order following the remarks of Senator REED of Rhode Island.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BROWNBACK). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REED. I ask to speak pursuant to the unanimous consent request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is recognized.

#### EDUCATION

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I will speak this evening on an issue of great importance to the country and every family in America. That is the issue of education.

For the past 4 months, the Republicans and Democrats on the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee have been working to come up with a bipartisan approach to the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Sadly, those efforts have collapsed and we are being presented with a Republican bill, the Straight A's Act, which is essentially a block granting of critical programs and the amassing of Federal resources to be distributed with little accountability by the States.

This issue is of great importance because education is what I believe is fueling the great economic progress we are making today. The 5-percent growth in productivity in the last quarter recognizes the combination of American technology, which is a product of our ideas, our education, and the skills and talents of the American people that have been forged in the classrooms of America.

Just as importantly, this recognition of the centrality and importance of education is shared by every American because they the mothers and fathers of this country, recognize that the future of their families, the future of their children, are dependent almost exclusively on how well they are educated. As a result, we cannot take lightly the proposals that are before the Senate with regard to the educational policy of the United States.

There are some who do not think the National Government has a role in edu-

cation. I disagree. We recognize, of course, the primacy of States and localities in terms of forging educational policy, but we do have a role at the national level. We have a role of providing both encouragement and support for local innovation and also support to overcome local inertia.

We have seen that played out throughout our history. We have seen a situation where years ago the States were inattentive to the needs of low-income students, particularly minority students. That is one of the primary impulses for the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act. We have seen in the past where States were indifferent to the education of students with disabilities, and we acted properly and appropriately to do that. So we do have this national role and we have to carry it out conscientiously, recognizing that public education is the bulwark of our society and our country.

Ninety percent of our students attend public schools. Public schools offer not only educational benefits but are the devices that bring us together, the common ground, the area in which one can enter and prepare to seize the opportunities of life without regard to race, creed, or ethnicity.

It is this public education system that we must enhance, reform, and reinvigorate. I argue that the approach to do that is not through block grants. The approach is a careful consideration of the appropriate Federal initiatives, both in terms of resources and in terms of programs, that will help stimulate reform at the local level and help overcome the inertia and the political gridlock we see every day at the localities and at the States just as they see on certain issues in Washington.

Again, I yield, as do all my colleagues, that the Federal Government is the junior partner in this partnership for education in America. We supply roughly 7 percent of all the resources; the States, the cities, and the towns supply 93 percent of the resources. However, we can do much, particularly in the area of focusing assistance on the neediest children and also, as I said before, to help invigorate our school system, to help accelerate reform.

Money isn't everything; it is vitally important, but we also need a sense of direction or purpose, of national statements about what is critical to the Nation as well as critical to localities and to States. That, too, is part and parcel to our deliberations about the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

We should be providing resources for local communities. One of the problems with the educational policy in the United States is it is tied so closely to property tax that we can witness situations where good school systems, particularly school systems in urban areas that were models of efficiency and expertise decades ago, have fallen on hard times because their property base has evaporated. People have moved to the suburbs; the industries have left the

central city and moved out. We can help, and we do that principally through title I programs.

Again, as we help with resources at the local level, we cannot give up the idea also that we have to provide this spark of innovation, the spark of reform that is so critical to the efforts. I believe also that this is recognized by many people at the State and local level, that our Goals 2000 initiative several years ago helped essentially start a reform process that was inchoate at the State and local level and many places that needed resources, even if there was a sense of reform. This effort, this identification of reform together with resources helped stimulate productive efforts that are improving the quality of education. But I also would say we have a long way to go before we can satisfy ourselves that every student in America, every child in America, has access to excellent public schools. That should be our goal, a goal we must insist upon.

Again, I am disappointed that efforts over the last several months to try to forge bipartisan compromise on the Elementary and Secondary Education Act have failed, apparently, for the moment. Tomorrow in the committee we begin to debate a legislative proposal that is simply abdicating the responsibilities of the National Government to the States without any real accountability. That is a wrong approach.

We have seen that because we have seen what the States have done in contrast to what the Federal Government has done in some critical areas of concern. I am not trying to suggest there is any type of nefarious plot at the States, but we all have to recognize they are under very special pressures in terms of allocating funds, in terms of local problems, a host of local issues that complicate their politics, and we have an opportunity sometimes to avoid those internecine fights that go on and provide direction that they welcome and they, in fact, in many cases expect.

One aspect of this debate about Federal versus State perspectives is a report prepared by the General Accounting Office in 1998. It was found Federal aid was seven times more targeted to poor students than State programs overall. It found our effort to reach out and help low-income students was disproportionately greater than State efforts. I think you have to ask yourself, logically, had we not acted in 1965 with title I, and in Congresses subsequent to that date to help out low-income students, both in center-city areas and in rural areas, would they enjoy the limited success they have had to date? I am not suggesting we succeeded in that arena.

I suggest you might find that same proportion of funding, those who are politically powerful in States, those suburban areas, those areas that themselves with property tax can fund schools, would do much better. In fact,